

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of selectively accepting content for caching, comprising steps of:
2 receiving, at a cache store, a request message inquiring whether the cache store will accept
3 particular content for caching;
4 deciding, responsive to receiving the request message, whether the cache store will accept
5 or reject the particular content; and
6 sending, from the cache store, a response to the request message, wherein the response
7 indicates the cache store's decision.

1 2. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
2 subsequently receiving, at the cache store, the particular content only if the response
3 indicated that the cache store's decision was to accept the particular content.

1 3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message describes the particular
2 content.

1 4. The method according to Claim 3, wherein the deciding step uses the description.

1 5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's size, and wherein the deciding step further comprises deciding whether content of that
3 size may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 6. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's type, and wherein the deciding step further comprises deciding whether content of that
3 type may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's security classification, and wherein the deciding step further comprises deciding whether
3 content of that security classification may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's hit rate, and wherein the deciding step further comprises deciding whether content
3 having that hit rate may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's hit rate, and wherein the deciding step further comprises deciding whether that hit rate is
3 higher than hit rates associated with other content already cached by the cache store and if so,
4 deciding to accept the particular content.

1 10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the deciding step considers historical metrics
2 associated with the particular content.

1 11. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the deciding step considers resources of the
2 cache store.

1 12. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the deciding step considers currently-available
2 resources of the cache store.

1 13. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message and the response are
2 encoded in a structured markup language.

1 14. The method according to Claim 13, wherein the structured markup language is Extensible
2 Markup Language (“XML”).

1 15. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request message includes an identifier of
2 the particular content and wherein the identifier is also included in the response.

1 16. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the deciding step compares a priority
2 associated with the particular content to priorities associated with already-cached content.

1 17. The method according to Claim 2, further comprising the step of storing the subsequently-
2 received particular content at the cache store.

1 18. The method according to Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
2 remembering, when the deciding step decides to accept the particular content, which
3 already-cached content will be replaced with the particular content; and

4 storing the subsequently-received particular content at the cache store.

1 10. A system for selectively accepting content for caching, comprising:

2 means for receiving, at a cache store, a request message inquiring whether the cache store
3 will accept particular content for caching;

4 means for deciding, responsive to receiving the request message, whether the cache store
5 will accept or reject the particular content; and

6 means for sending, from the cache store, a response to the request message, wherein the
7 response indicates the cache store's decision.

1 11. The system according to Claim 10, further comprising:

2 means for subsequently receiving, at the cache store, the particular content only if the
3 response indicated that the cache store's decision was to accept the particular content.

1 12. The system according to Claim 10, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's size, and wherein the means for deciding further comprises means for deciding whether
3 content of that size may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 13. The system according to Claim 10, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's type, and wherein the means for deciding further comprises means for deciding whether
3 content of that type may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 14. The system according to Claim 10, wherein the request message specifies the particular
2 content's security classification, and wherein the means for deciding further comprises means for
3 deciding whether content of that security classification may be advantageously cached by the
4 cache store.

1 15. A computer program product for selectively accepting content for caching, the computer
2 program product embodied on one or more computer-readable media and comprising:

3 computer-readable program code means for receiving, at a cache store, a request message
4 inquiring whether the cache store will accept particular content for caching;

5 computer-readable program code means for deciding, responsive to receiving the request
6 message, whether the cache store will accept or reject the particular content; and

7 s computer-readable program code means for ending, from the cache store, a response to
8 the request message, wherein the response indicates the cache store's decision.

1 16. The computer program product according to Claim 1, further comprising:

2 computer-readable program code means for subsequently receiving, at the cache store, the
3 particular content only if the response indicated that the cache store's decision was to accept the
4 particular content.

1 17. The computer program product according to Claim 1, wherein the request message
2 specifies the particular content's hit rate, and wherein the computer-readable program code means
3 for deciding further comprises computer-readable program code means for deciding whether

4 content having that hit rate may be advantageously cached by the cache store.

1 18. The computer program product according to Claim 1, wherein the request message
2 specifies the particular content's hit rate, and wherein the computer-readable program code means
3 for deciding further comprises computer-readable program code means for deciding whether that
4 hit rate is higher than hit rates associated with other content already cached by the cache store and
5 if so, deciding to accept the particular content.